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Working Group I
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

Compilation of views of Governments on the environmentally sound management of biotechnology

1. This document is a compilation of views on the environmentally sound management of biotechnology submitted to the secretariat after the third session of the Preparatory Committee. At the request of the Preparatory Committee it has been prepared as part of the input into the discussions on the Agenda 21 options for the environmentally sound management of biotechnology at the fourth session.

Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela

2. See A/CONF.151/PC/WG.I/L.26. 1/

India

3. With reference to document A/CONF.151/PC/WG.I/L.30:

(a) Paragraphs 6 (e) and 30 (b): reference to a biotechnology consortium or corporation for development should be put in brackets and the following added: "or intergovernmental body";

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* See A/CONF.151/PC/96.

(b) Paragraph 11 (a): replace "in combination with" by "to enhance";

(c) Paragraph 11 (e): add "and applications in agriculture and health";

(d) Paragraph 22, line 2: after "population growth", add "and life consumption patterns";

(e) Paragraph 31 (e): add "and sharing of profits of biotechnology products";

(f) Paragraph 31 (d): replace "benefits" with "profits".

Venezuela

4. The Government of Venezuela proposes the addition of the following programme area:

"BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE"

Basis for action

5. Paragraph 8 of the English version of document A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.5 is acceptable.

Objectives

6. The aim of this programme is to help increase and improve the productivity of agricultural systems through the use of biotechnology applications in the conservation and use of germ plasm for agricultural purposes, the improvement of plant and animal species of use for meeting human needs, the development of environmentally sound farming practices and the improvement of the quality of the environment in rural areas.

7. The specific objectives include:

(a) To help increase and improve the productivity of the main usable plant and animal species in developing regions;

(b) To help conserve genetic forestry resources that might be used in programmes to domesticate and improve new biological species of use to human beings;

(c) To design and develop agricultural practices that gradually phase out the use of toxic products (pesticides and others) and make for more efficient management of plant and domestic animal nutrition.

Activities

8. The proposed activities are as follows:

(a) To promote the integration of "appropriate" technologies and conventional and advanced technologies (biotechnologies) in order to develop genetically modified plants that are more productive and resistant to or tolerant of biotic and abiotic stresses;

(b) To promote the integration of appropriate technologies, conventional technologies and advanced techniques in reproduction and health biotechnology to accelerate the improvement of animal stocks for specific needs;

(c) To encourage a more rapid introduction of biotechnology applications to conserve endangered genetic forestry resources that are potentially useful for producing food and fibres;

(d) To set up and strengthen national and regional centres for the conservation of genetic resources for sustainable agriculture;

(e) To develop and use biotechnologies to replace environmentally unsound pesticides and chemical fertilizers by environmentally sound alternatives, including improved nitrogen fixation efficiency in legumes and grasses, and phosphorus uptake efficiency;

(f) To formulate and carry out an accelerated training programme for biotechnology researchers in animal and plant agriculture within the next few years;

(g) To promote technology transfer mechanisms in biotechnology, based on the principles of fairness, the great biological diversity of developing countries and the intellectual property rights of local farmers.

Notes

1/ A revised version of the document (A/CONF.151/PC/WG.I/L.28*) will be before the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session.

ANNEX

Letter dated 4 September 1991 from the Head of the Delegation of Venezuela addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference

Since 1981, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has been operating the International Centre of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) under its own auspices as a project, which will very shortly take final form. The Ambassador of Venezuela to France, Mr. Adolfo R. Taylhardat, presides over the Preparatory Committee for the establishment of the Centre and has informed us that he has submitted a document to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development outlining the role the Centre might play in promoting sustainable development. Document A/CONF.151/PC/66 mentions ICGEB in paragraph 35.

In view of the fact that this Centre could be a basic channel for North-South cooperation, it would be desirable to include it among the instruments envisaged in Agenda 21. If you are of the same opinion, we should be very grateful if you would give instructions for it to be considered in the most appropriate forum.

(Signed) Arnoldo José GABALDON
Head of the Delegation of Venezuela